



# HOLISTIC HEALTH

Dr. Shrinivas J. Kashalikar

# HOLISTIC HEALTH

*by*

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# **HOLISTIC HEALTH**

## **CONTENTS**

1]	<b>WHAT IS HOLISTIC HEALTH ?</b>	<b>1</b>
2]	<b>WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HOLISTIC HEALTH ?</b>	<b>2</b>
3]	<b>ARE WE HEALTHY IN A HOLISTIC SENSE ?</b>	<b>8</b>
4]	<b>WHY HOLISTIC HEALTH ?</b>	<b>13</b>
5]	<b>WHICH IS THE WAY TO HOLISTIC HEALTH ?</b>	<b>14</b>

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## 1] WHAT IS HOLISTIC HEALTH ?

The word **HOLISTIC** is derived from the word **HOLOS**. **HOLOS** means considered as a whole. It thus is beyond religion and present day prevalent scientific concept of **HEALTH** in which a fragment of human existence is considered as the **WHOLE**. '**HEALTH**' of this fragment is considered as **HEALTH** and it is further 'classified' into physical, mental, social, spiritual etc. The definition of **W.H.O.** is not exception this. **SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GEETA** classifies holistic conceptualisation or such knowledge as **SATVIKAM**, the popular knowledge as **RAJASAM** and when someone remains adamant of one's concept due to ignorance of every other possibility as **TAMASAM**. [**GEETA** 18/19, 20 21] The concept of holistic health resides in concept of **SELF** realization [which includes **KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE** and

**EXPRESSION of SELF.** This is also called as **SWADHARMA**. In short, holistic health is pursuit and practice of **SWADHARMA**.

## **2] WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HOLISTIC HEALTH ?**

**HOLISTIC HEALTH OR SWADHARMA** is associated with :

### **1] SPIRITUAL HEALTH :**

Perspective of oneness or continuity of the essence of universe and that of the man. [Most of the times we are oblivious of this because of the limitations of our intellectual and perceptual framework]. This is truly spiritual health. There is a vast literature produced by doctors, god men etc. on '**SPIRITUALITY**'. They

use this word synonymously with some techniques to tranquil mind and some esoteric methods to get so called peace [ even as rest of the society languishes in pain ]. But their concept is different from the concept of spiritual health as I understand it and is also endorsed in Geeta.

**III] INTELLECTUAL HEALTH :**  
From **SPIRITUAL HEALTH** spring thoughts or ideas which are reflected in globally beneficial policies in one's field. This is **INTELLECTUAL HEALTH**. It has to be reflected in every possible field. Some examples are as follows :

- a] An engineer may come out with a policy in his field which would benefit mankind. This is called



**INTELLECTUAL HEALTH IN  
SCIENTIFIC AND  
TECHNOLOGICAL FIELD.**

b] If an artist conceives a policy that would help his art form benefit the mankind then that can be called **INTELLECTUAL HEALTH IN CULTURAL FIELD.**

c] Economists of repute if prepare an economic policy which would promote healthy, active and productive coexistence promoting uniform economic growth all over the world as against exploitation of some by the others, then that can be called **INTELLECTUAL HEALTH IN ECONOMIC or FINANCIAL FIELD.**

d] Similarly global policies for protecting and grooming global environment can be called **INTELLECTUAL HEALTH IN ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD.**

e] Global policies incorporating concepts of *SWDAHRMA* in education [formal and informal] reflect **INTELLECTUAL HEALTH IN EDUCATIONAL FIELD.**

f] Global policies of political nature with beneficial impact on the whole universe can be called **INTELLECTUAL HEALTH IN POLITICAL FIELD.**

All these can also be called examples of *DNYANA SHAKTI.*

**III] MENTAL HEALTH :** Desire and indefatigable enthusiasm to study, appreciate and when required refine any of the relevant policies from the above policies constitutes **MENTAL HEALTH**. This is called **ICCHA SHAKTI** which is associated with **SHUDDHA SANKALPA** that follows **SANKALPA SHUDDHI**. **SANKALPA SHUDDHI** means purification of purpose, or aim of life. This **ICCHA SHAKTI** illuminates different fields which ever the individual may be working as depicted in the foregoing.

**IV] PHYSICAL HEALTH :** Physical energy and activity to popularize and implement any of the relevant policies from above or various other policies

in the form of concrete plans and programmes is **PHYSICAL HEALTH**. This is called **KRIYA SHAKTI** and is associated with socially beneficial work output in a given field. Such work output is called **SATKARMA**.

V] The interactions springing from one's existence characterized by above qualities in family and society decide the state of **HEALTH** of family or society as well as **FAMILIAL** or **SOCIAL HEALTH** of the individual.

VI] It also decides **FINANCIAL HEALTH** in terms of whether he / she earns his livelihood honestly, sufficiently and spends it appropriately for oneself, as

well as for one's family and the society.

Similarly from the efficient use of *KRIYASHAKTI*, *ICCHASHAKTI* and *DNYANASHAKTI*, by virtue of proper perspective i.e. **SPIRITUAL HEALTH** one achieves **HEALTH** in which ever field he or she may be in.

### 3] **ARE WE HEALTHY IN A HOLISTIC SENSE ?**

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Everyone of us can think about whether he/she is healthy or not by the criteria which we have dealt with in the foregoing. Even if one's profession or field is not found in the above list it should not be difficult to make one's own assessment with respect to **HOLISTIC HEALTH**.



By many of us richness is considered as financial health. Though I don't consider poverty as financial health, individual's richness per say especially when 'unqualified' can in itself never be a criteria of **FINANCIAL HEALTH**. As mentioned above the means and ways of earning and ways of spending are very important. This is true for any given field.

It may be easily appreciated that in **HOLISTIC HEALTH** everything is directed to **UNIVERSAL WELFARE**. The older name for this is **YAJNA**. **YAJNA** was aimed for maintenance of **HOMEOSTASIS** of the universe [I call it **COSMIC HOMEOSTASIS**] which is essential for the healthy life of every individual. This is another basis or explanation for concept of **HOLISTIC HEALTH**. It may be

appreciated that there are ample references where life lived in absence of this is referred to as that of thief and sinner. ] **GEETA** : 3/12, 3/13 and 3/16]. It is very interesting to look at ourselves in this light and then realize that we can really and **HOLISTICALLY** be **HEALTHY** even if we have some deficiencies in our body, some defects in our mind or nature such as some habits which are condemned as unhealthy and dangerous to health or some diseases such as diabetes, piles, hypertension, aging etc...It is totally wrong and absurd to give, lop sided importance to physical ailments. [Though there is NO doubt and NO difference of opinion that they should be treated, alleviated, cured or prevented when possible] and stamp ourselves handicapped, guilty or diseased and assume a pitiable / miserable / condemnable position in our own

eyes. Such self pity itself is actually indicative of gross misunderstanding about health. It is important to realize that **HOLISTIC HEALTH** does not define rigid criteria for individual's assessment but gives a broad and accommodative guideline so that depending on the individual's constitution there can be some variations in the life of various individuals and yet they can have the same or similar score in terms of **HOLISTIC HEALTH** and vice versa.

Thus a man with excellent physic and jovial nature may turn out to be very unhealthy from holistic point of view where as a person like Vivekananda who had five diseases including insomnia, diabetes mellitus, ascites, arthritis and bronchial asthma turns out to be one of the healthiest persons the globe has ever produced.

History has several examples in this regard and from them we can verify the validity of my system of evaluation. I give equal importance to all categories or aspects of **HOLISTIC HEALTH** such as physical, mental, intellectual etc...This is because I am not considering merely physical attributes of the physical health. I am in fact considering the most spiritual attributes of the bodily existence and activities. Thus if a man toils whole heartedly for the **WELFARE OF MANKIND** i.e. physically participates in the *YAJNA*, then he deserves points equal to one who participates intellectually in the *YAJNA* but may not work physically.

It is to be appreciated that physic, intellect, mind, society, family etc. are **NOT** judged here by their material attributes restricted



to merely petty existence but are entirely judged by their participation in the **WELFARE OF MANKIND** i.e. **YAJNA**. Thus those who do not have any element of **YAJNA** in their life will have to conclude that they have to go a long way to reach **HOLISTIC HEALTH** even if they are educated, intelligent, artistic, rich, famous, politically powerful and physically strong !

#### 4] **WHY HOLISTIC HEALTH ?**

One may question the very requirement of **HOLISTIC HEALTH** and rightly so. Because there is nothing that one should take without due scrutiny.

Is **HOLISTIC HEALTH** all that necessary? Really speaking this should be left to one's own discretion. This is because we respect individual freedom. We respect democratic



norms. But if one carefully thinks over this, then one would realize that **HOLISTIC HEALTH** is **NOT** a matter of compulsion or imposition at all. It is matter of choice. It is a matter of privilege. It is a matter of greatest opportunity. It is a matter of one's own freedom. It is a matter of achieving one's own fulfillment. **HOLISTIC HEALTH** or **SWADHARMA** is a matter of biggest possible gain that one can ever imagine to pursue irrespective of one's race, color, nationality, religion, caste, culture, language, financial status, educational status etc.

**5] WHICH IS THE WAY TO HOLISTIC HEALTH :**

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One can easily appreciate that in absence of the **SPIRITUAL HEALTH** in true sense the **HOLISTIC HEALTH** is impossible.

This is a major problem. It is relatively less difficult to [though not always easy and possible] decide and do physical exercise, read, keep away from stealing, eating inappropriate food, take bath, take medical care and treatment etc...But it is impossible to voluntarilly decide and implant or transplant **SPIRITUAL HEALTH** [as conceptualized in the foregoing]. This is because till such time as we decide to do such an activity our petty conceptual framework called **DEHA BUDHHI** or **ANANKAR** remains intact. It is to be appreciated that awareness of body per se is not **DEHA BUDDHI**. But considering our entire **SELF** as only our body [**ANNAMAYA KOSHA** or **STHoola SHARIRA**] is erroneous and is called **DEHABUDDHI** ☉ **AHANKAR**. **AHANKAR** is not arrogance. Though

arrogance is one of the frequent manifestations of **AHANKARA** and **DEHABUDDHI**. Also considering **MANOMAYA KOSHA**, **VIDNYANMAYA KOSHA**, **PRANAMAYA KOSHA**, etc. as **SELF** is also **DEHABUDDHI**.

So the way to acquire **SPIRITUAL HEALTH** is learning to overcome the compelling influence of our conceptual framework which includes our passions, instincts, emotions, ideas, thoughts, imaginations etc...In one sense this is a process of getting freedom from our petty self. This process involves marching away from arbitrary do's and don'ts. Thus one learns to rise above indulgence / suppression in one's passions, emotions, thoughts, whims and fancies etc..This is called **YUKTAHARAVIHARA** in **GEETA**, [4/17].

It should be obvious that this is not possible by merely doing a variety of intellectual, emotional, physical, social activities. Secondly it is not possible by merely sitting, standing, walking or dancing in some meditation for some time. It is not possible by **HATHA YOGA** alone or by eating 'tonics'. It is not possible by doing regular jogging or aerobics. It is not possible by becoming vegetarians or non vegetarian. It is not possible by merely reading or writing. It is neither possible by just pledging not to drink nor is it possible by proudly pledging to drink. It is not possible by only donating lot of money or by miserly conduct. It is not possible merely by any such means.

All these things are not useless or harmless and may be of either use or concern or may be disgusting and dangerous to different

individuals amongst us. We may have personal likes and dislikes any may pamper them as well, but the point is that these things do not prove or disprove **SPIRITUAL HEALTH**. If one tries to impose them, then that is tantamount to fetish or fanaticism.

The way to **SPIRITUAL HEALTH** is **NAMASMARAN**. The **NAMASMARAN** transcends the very origin of thoughts either articulated or otherwise in various parts of brain and thereby helps us overcome the influence of opposing dualities. This is called **SAMATWA** as well as **SAMYAYOGA** [**JGEETA** 6/32 and 6/33 respectively].

The petty self in case of human beings is nothing else but a process of transformation of instincts, intuitions, emotions into language. The language and simultaneous



awareness of it causes conflicts full of guilt / pride, pain / pleasure etc. Therefore it is very natural that man's petty self gains strength and expression through language written or spoken and articulated consciously or subconsciously. Therefore it is quite understandable how *NAMASMARAN* i.e. a process which goes on amidst the dualities takes us beyond the dualities. It is important to appreciate that unlike autosuggestion, *NAMASMARAN* is a very natural process of neglecting one's own as well as other's ideas in the form of memory, imaginations etc. and then gradually overcoming them. Since there is no autosuggestion, the likes and dislikes or **aims and objectives of petty personal nature** start losing significance and thus the biggest hurdle in realization of SELF gets dissolved. In the course of time the man

really starts feeling the continuity of his **SELF** with that of the universe. This **SPIRITUAL HEALTH** is associated with strength, fearlessness, ecstasy. It is always and invariably associated with the process of developing **INTELLETUAL, MENTAL, PHYSICAL, FAMILIAL and SOCIAL HEALTH.**

Is is to be noted that all endeavors in the field of physical exercise, drug treatment, **HATHAYOGA**, sports etc. which are going on today are important but their scope gets multiplied by multitudes when they based on this concept of **HOLISTIC HEALTH.**

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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This booklet is written after experience of sociomedical work in a village for three years, sociomedical work in urban population for about ten years, teaching in medical college for about twenty years, teaching in Medical University in U.S.A. for one year and study of Geeta, Dnyaneshwari, Dasabodh, Gurucharitra etc. for more than twenty years and chanting complete Geeta every day for more than two years.

The author suggest that the reader should not believe - but consider the contents of this booklet with open mind and tally it with their experience.

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